

OVERVIEW: TEACH PLUS NEVADA

The mission of Teach Plus is to empower excellent, experienced, and diverse teachers to take leadership over key policy and practice issues that affect their students' success. Teach Plus is guided by our Student Opportunity Mandate: All students should have the opportunity to achieve their potential in an education system defined by its commitment to equity, its responsiveness to individual needs, and its ability to prepare students for postsecondary success.

THE CHALLENGE

There are currently four diplomas available in Nevada to students graduating from public high school: two general-education and two inclusive-adaptive diplomas. Only one is identified as a college and career readiness diploma. The [College and Career Readiness \(CCR\) High School Diploma](#) was introduced as the result of Assembly Bill 7, passed by the 2017 Legislature—“revising requirements for a plan to improve the achievement of pupils enrolled in a public school.” The prescribed criteria for Nevada students to receive a college and career readiness diploma, without the need for college remedial coursework, makes them qualified for and prepared to succeed in post-secondary education or job training in high-demand occupations. [Nevada Department of Education Media Release, March 16, 2018] Yet, in 2022, only 26% of Nevada high school graduates earned a college and career readiness diploma.

We recommend that legislators adopt Assembly Bill 241 to ensure that students are automatically opted into the college and career pathway to receive a college and career ready high school diploma.

“I wish we [had] got[ten] more life skills classes along with career field [exploration]classes. I was missing life skills leaving high school.”

—Nevada High School Graduate

THE SOLUTION

We are a group of educators and Teach Plus Nevada Policy Fellows who are focused on improving college and career readiness in Nevada. To better understand the lived high school experiences of Nevada high school graduates and their perspectives on their transition(s) to college, career, and community, we hosted focus groups and interviews of twenty-one individuals who attended and graduated from public high schools (traditional, career and technical education, and charter schools) in Nevada. Below are our findings and recommendations on how the state and districts should ensure that Nevada learners are well-positioned for postsecondary success, as well as lifelong learning.

FINDINGS

1. Students want to be well-prepared to succeed in college and career and have access to a well-rounded, diverse series of course electives. specifically including life skills.
2. High school graduates have a limited awareness of the college and career options that are available to them as they transition from high school to community.
3. [Durable skills](#), such as communication, teamwork, collaboration, negotiation, critical thinking, adaptability, and leadership are in high demand in diverse contexts and industries and students feel that such skills are not intentionally developed within the existing high school curriculum or programs of study.
4. Student internships with accompanying mentorship and community leadership would position students well for competitive college and career opportunities.
5. Personal finance and financial literacy are essential skills that high student graduates lack as they transition to college, career, and community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Legislators should adopt [Assembly Bill 241](#) to ensure that students are automatically opted into the college and career pathway to receive a college and career-ready high school diploma.
2. Districts should expand college and career exploration programs to ensure high school students have diverse college and career choices.
3. Districts should afford students the opportunity to develop and cultivate lifelong, durable skills including communication, teamwork, collaboration, negotiation, critical thinking, adaptability, and leadership in middle and high school.
4. Districts should incorporate student internships and community leadership opportunities into high school experiences in support of postsecondary success.
5. District and school leaders should further develop and require personal finance and financial literacy course series.

If our state is to ensure that all students are college and career ready, it must make a lasting commitment to strategic changes in education. If Nevada invests in teacher-informed and equity-driven priorities, we can provide our Nevada students with an equitable education that affords them the skills, knowledge, and disposition to pursue and succeed in college, career, and beyond.